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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Irene Iguba DATE 10/5/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH 01382 REASON (3)
DOUBLE EXCISING MARKINGS ☐
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RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5095

SEPT 02

SUBJ: CA ELECTION: BIEN HOA PROVINCE

1. EMBOFF ATTENDED 2 HOUR CAMPAIGN RALLY SEPTEMBER ONE IN HO NAI VILLAGE, BIEN HOA PROVINCE, ABOUT 25 MILES NORTHEAST OF SAIGON. VILLAGE IS CENTER OF AREA WHERE 65,000 MILITANT NORTHERN CATHOLIC REFUGEES ARE RESETTLED. VISIT AFFORDED OPPORTUNITY TO GUAGE ENTHUSIASM FOR ELECTION IN THIS IMPORTANT PROVINCE AND TAKE FINAL LOOK AT CANDIDATES (REF EMBASSY'S A-45, ENCLOSURE #2, AND A-91).

RSR

2. FLUCTUATING CROWD, WHICH WAS 80 PERCENT MALE AND REACHED PEAKS OF 600 ADULTS, TURNED OUT TO CHEER LIST HEADED

BY LOCAL FAVORIATE VU MIN CHAU AND HECKLE REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER FIVE LISTS. REFERENCES TO LIBERATION OF NORTH, SUFFERINGS OF REFUGEES, PATROTISM OF CATHOLICS DREW APPLAUSE. TWO BUDDHIST CANDIDATES LARGELY IGNORED; ABOUT A THIRD OF CROWD WALKED OUT WHILE ONE SPOKE. LUCID DISCUSSION OF CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES BY CATHOLIC JUDGE TRUONG HBEQDAT FELL FLAT. HEILERS PLANTED

IN AUDIENCE (MAINLY CATHOLIC LAM SON YOUTH ASSOCIATION CADRES) RUDELY ASSAULTED CATHOLIC RIVALS OF CHAU DURING QUESTION PERIOD; PARTISAN CROWD WAS DELIGHTED.

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VETERAN SAIGON CATHOLIC POLITICIAN LE QUANG LUAT QUESTIONED MOST ROUGHLY. RELAY TEAM OF HECKLERS CHARGED LUAT WITH

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SHOWING ONE FACE TO BUDDHISTS, ANOTHER TO CATHOLICS; WITH ILLICIT RICHES ACQUIRED DURING 1954 REFUGEE EXODUS (HE WAS AT TIME GVN DELEGATE IN HANOI); AND WITH CONDESCENDING ATTITUDE TOWARD BIEN HOA "YOKELS". TWO CANDIDATES WHO PROMISED CHICKEN IN EVERY RICE

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BOWL WERE SCORNFULLY RECIEVED; ONE, VU TRI PHUONG, WAS REMINDED HE HAD PROMISED SAME THINGS WHEN ELECTED TO PROVINCIAL COUNCIL IN 1965 AND HAD NOT DELIVERED. SCATTERING OF ELDERLY MEN IN TRADITIONAL DRESS SEEMED MILDLY ANNOYED BY HECKLING BUT BULK OF ADULTS APPEARED TO ENJOY THE SHOW.

3. THIS MEETING, TAKEN WITH REPORTS OF OTHERS, INDICATES THAT LEADING CATHOLIC CANDIATES CHAU, DAT AND LUAT CONCENTRATING FIRE ON ONE ANOTHER, IGNORING BUDDHIST CANDIATES DO HUU QUON AND TAN SANH AND DISCREDITED CATHOLIC PHUONG. (FIST FIGHTS REPORTED BETWEEN BACKERS OF CHAU AND AT TWO PREVIOUS MEETINGS.)

4. QUON HAS REPORTEDLY WON DISCREET BACKING OF MOST BIEN HOA DAO. GIVEN INTERNAL DIVISION OF CATHOLICS, QUON SHOULD LEAD FIELD. CHAU WILL WIN SECOND SEAT, WITH THIRD A TOSS-UP. DAT AND LUAT HAVE CHANCE, AS DOES VO VAN TRUYEN, NUMBER TWO ON QUON SLATE. SANH AND PHUONG CANDIDATES HOPELESS.

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5. DAT AND LUAT ARE INTELLECTUALS' FAVORITES, AND PROBABLY MOST UUALIFIED, BUT ARE VICTIMS STRONG BIAS IN FAVOR LOCAL RESIDENTS. JUDGE DAT IN PARTICULAR HAVING DIFFICULTY PITCHING SPEECHES AT LEVEL OF COMMON PEOPLE, BUT ENJOYS UNBLEMISHED BACKGROUND IN COMPARISON WITH "OLD POL" LUAT.
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5085

SEPT 02

HW HUE'S TEL 155 TO SAIGON SIGNED CORCORAN SEPT 01

REF: HUE'S 118

1. QUANG TRI VOTERS AS POSTED SECOND TIME TOTALED 100,518 REPEAT 100,518 AN INCREASE OF 2,575 FROM 97,943 AT FIRST POSTING. NEW TOTAL INCLUDES: 88,648 CIVILIANS, 11,870 MILITARY AND DEPENDENTS, AND 1,107 MONTAGNARDS. THE PROVINCE WILL HAVE A TOTAL OF 70 POLLING SITES WITH 94 BALLOT BOXES. AN ADDITIONAL 10 VOTING SITES WILL BE USED FOR UNITS ON OPERATIONS. LOCATION WILL DEPEND ON UNIT'S LOCATION ON ELECTION DAY.

RSR

2. BY DISTRICT THE BREAKDOWN IS AS FOLLOWS:

A. TRIEK PHONG: CIVILIANS-24,170; MILITARY-637; TOTAL: 24,807. WILL HAVE 27 BALLOT BOXES AT 15 LOCATIONS OF WHICH 3 BALLOT BOXES

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AT 3 DIFFERENT SITES ARE FOR THE MILITARY.

B. CAM LO: CIVILIANS-12,807; MILITARY-3,656; MONTAGNARDS-204; TOTAL: 16,463. WILL HAVE 14 BALLOT BOXES AT 14 LOCATIONS OF WHICH 63 ARE FOR MILITARY.

C. HUONG HOA: CIVILIANS-1,287; MILITARY-475; MONTAGNARDS-903; TOTAL-1,762. 2 BALLOT BOXES AT 2 DIFFERENT SITES.

D. HAI LANG: CIVILIANS-21,010; MILITARY-1,106; TOTAL -22,116. 21 BALLOT BOXES AT 11 SITES.

E. MAI LINH: CIVILIANS-18,254; MILITARY-5,163 TOTAL-23,417. 19 BALLOT BOXES AT 17 LOCATIONS WITH 2 RESERVED FOR MILITARY.

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F. GIO LINH: CIVILIANS-6,106; MILITARY-742; TOTAL-6,848. 6 BALLOT BOXES AT 6 SITES.

G. TRUNG LUONG: CIVILIANS-5,014; MILITARY-91 TOTAL 5,105. 5 BALLOT BOXES AT 5 SITES.

3. COMMENT: NEW VOTER FIGURE REPRESENTS INCREASE OF 2,270 CIVILIANS AND 305 MILITARY. MILITARY FIGURES INCLUDE DEPENDENTS. PREVIOUS TOTAL OF 97,943 INCLUDED 57,494 FEMALE VOTERS AND 40,449 MALE VOTERS. BREAKDOWN BY SEX NOT AVAILABLE FOR ADDITIONAL 2,575 VOTERS.

SECTOR ADVISORY PERSONNEL STATE ALL VOTING SITES BUT 5--2 IN CAM LO AND 3 IN HAI LANG--CAN BE SECURED. MACV REPORT WILL BE POUCHED.

GP-3.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5210

SEPT 03

CG III MAF PASS AMCONSUL DANANG 131 FOR POLAD FRANCIS

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REF: STATE 39889

1. ON AUGUST 29 GVN APPARENTLY COMPLETED DECREE SETTING FORTH PENALTIES FOR PERSONS FOUND GUILTY OF HINDERING ELECTIONS, AND PASSED WORD TO POLICE AND UNOFFICIALLY TO PRESS SOURCES THAT IT HAD DONE SO. LAW ACTUALLY APPEARED ON SEPT 1 AS DECREE 032/66, AMENDING AND COMPLETING DECREE -LAW 13/64 ISSUED BY HUONG GOVT DEALING WITH PENALTIES FOR INTERFERING WITH ELECTIONS. DECREE 032/66 SPECIFIES THAT PERSONS "GUILTY OF INTERFERING WITH CITIZENS'

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RIGHT TO VOTE OR FREEDOM TO STAND FOR ELECTION BY PREVENTING THEM FROM GOING TO THE POLL, IRREGULARITIES IN BALLAT CASTING, OR DAMAGING OR TEARING UP VOTER CARDS, OR THREATENING OR BEATING VOTERS TO INTIMIDATE THEM INTO NOT GOING TO POLLS, WILL BE SENTENCED TO PRISON OR TO HARD LABOR." HARD LABOR SENTENCES WILL BE PASSED OUT TO THOSE WHOSE OFFENSE WAS "PREMEDITATED ACT" OR TO PERSONS ON GVN PAYROLL.

2. WHILE WE ARE NOT HAPPY WITH SOME OF SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OF DECREE LAW 032/66, GVN WAS APPARENTLY CONVINCED SOME SUCH LAW WAS ESSENTIAL TO GIVE SECURITY FORCES NECESSARY LEGAL AUTHORITY TO DEAL WITH ALL-OUT VIET CONG CAMPAIGN TO DISRUPT ELECTIONS. WE WILL ENCOURAGE GVN

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AVOID OVER-ZEALOUS APPLICATION OF LAW BUT DO NOT WISH TO GIVE GVN IMPRESSION THAT USG WISHES TO LIMIT IN ANY WAY RIGHT AND DUTY OF SECURITY FORCES TO PROTECT VOTERS AND CANDIDATES FROM VIET CONG TERROR.

3. INCIDENT REPORTED BY REUTERS OF "POSTER VANDAL" TOOK PLACE NIGHT OF AUGUST 30. POLICE SAW MAN BEARING DOWN ELECTION POSTERS AND ORDERED HIM TO HALT. MAN RAN. POLICE FIRED TWO WARNING SHOTS. MAN KEPT RUNNING.

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POLICE FIRED SHOT AT MAN WHICH KILLED HIM. DEAD MAN HAD NO IDENTIFICATION PAPERS OF ANY KIND, WAS CARRYING LOADED 9MM PISTOL AND WAS PRESUMABLY VC. WE BELIEVE POLICE COULD HARDLY BE EXPECTED ACT WITH MORE RESTRAINT IN VIEW OF PRESENT TERROR CAMPAIGN.

4. THERE HAVE BEEN HUNDREDS OF INCIDENTS OF VIET CONG ANTI-ELECTION TERROR THROUGHOUT COUNTRY IN PAST FEW WEEKS. FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE SOME FORTY REPORTS FROM GIA DINH PROVINCE ALONE (WHERE US AND GVN INTELLIGENCE IS GOOD) OF VIET CONG CADRE VISITING HAMLETS AND VILLAGES, THREATENING PEOPLE WITH BODILY HARM IF THEY VOTE. THERE WERE SEVERAL INSTANCES OF POLLING SITES (OFTEN GVN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES) BEING BOMBED. UNLESS GVN CAN DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH TERROR CAMPAIGN, AND GIVE PEOPLE IMPRESSION IT IS DOING SO (E.G., BY PUBLICIZING ISSUANCE OF DECREE:032/66 AND SHOOTING OF "POSTER VANDAL"), IT RUNS SERIOUS RISK OF GIVING VIET CONG MAJOR PROPAGANDA VICTORY. SHOULD FOLLOWERS OF

PAGE 4 RUMJIR 5210 C O N F I D E N T I A L
BUDDHIST INSTITUTE EMULATE VIET CONG ANTI-ELECTION TACTICS IN EXCESS OF RELIGIOUS FERVOR, THEY WILL PRESUMABLY HAVE TO BEAR CONSEQUENCES IF CAUGHT. WE STILL BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT MAIN PURPOSE AND IMPACT OF DECREE DIRECTED AGAINST VC TERRORISM.

5. CASE OF BUSINESSMAN PHAM VAN TON WHOLLY SEPARATE FROM DEATH OF PRESUMED VIET CONG AGENT. SPECIAL COURT

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HAS BEEN FUNCTIONING FOR SIX MONTHS AND HAS HANDED DOWN SEVERAL SCORE SENTENCES TO MERCHANTS FOUND GUILTY OF BLACKMARKET ACTIVITIES OR EXCEEDING LEGAL PRICE CEILINGS AND TO CIVIL SERVANTS FOUND GUILTY OF MISUSING THEIR POSITIONS FOR PERSONAL ENRICHMENT. SENTENCES HAVE RANGED FROM SEVERAL MONTHS TO DEATH. LATTER SENTENCE HAS BEEN IMPOSED THREE TIMES: CHINESE MERCHANT (TA VINH), DALAT CITY TREASURER AND NOW PHAM VAN TON. SENTENCE OF DALAT CITY TREASURER IS THREE MONTHS OLD AND HAS NOT RPT NOT BEEN CARRIED OUT AND HIS APPEAL FOR CLEMENCY TO CHIEF OF STATE STILL PENDING. SENTENCE OF PHAM VAN TON HANDED DOWN IN ABSENTIA. IT IS PROBABLE THAT HE HAS ALREADY LEFT

COUNTRY AND VERY DOUBTFUL THAT DEATH SENTENCE WILL BE CARRIED OUT. COURT PROBABLY HAD THIS IN MIND AND ISSUED SEVERE SENTENCE PRIMARILY FOR ITS DETERRENT EFFECT ON OTHER VIOLATORS. LODGE
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